

News

From the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission

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NEWS RELEASE

GREENUP WOMAN WINS 2004 VOLUNTEER AWARD FROM KENTUCKY STATE NATURE PRESERVES COMMISSION *Sonja Fields 'has done it all' at Jesse Stuart preserve*

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Dec. 8, 2004) – A Greenup County woman who has given a decade of service to the Jesse Stuart State Nature Preserve today was presented the 2004 Volunteer Steward Award by the Kentucky State Nature Preserves Commission.

In 10 years as preserve monitor at Jesse Stuart, Sonja Fields has done it all: trail inspection and maintenance, signs and building maintenance, litter clean up, boundary patrol and visitor information. Preserve monitors are the right arms of the commission's stewardship staff and Sonja Fields is one of the best.

"Sonja has saved us many hours of work and driving time by taking care of a lot of projects for us," said Joyce Bender, the commission's Nature Preserves and Natural Areas branch manager. "We have had several situations develop which required immediate action. With a three-hour drive from Frankfort, it is not possible for preserve management staff to quickly get to Jesse Stuart SNP as a questionable situation unfolds."

Fields' selflessness is apparent. Asked what she hoped to gain from her volunteer experience, she said: "The good feeling of knowing that I'm helping preserve something beautiful for future generations to enjoy."

KSNPC's mission is to protect Kentucky's natural heritage by: (1) identifying, acquiring and managing natural areas that represent the best-known occurrences of rare, native species, natural communities and significant natural features in a statewide nature preserve system; (2) working with others to protect biological diversity; and (3) educating Kentuckians as to the value and purpose of nature preserves and biodiversity conservation. The commission inventories Kentucky for significant natural areas and protects the best examples in a state nature preserve system with 19,077 acres statewide.

Information about the commission can be obtained by mail: KSNPC, 801 Schenkel Lane, Frankfort, KY 40601-1403, by telephone (502) 573-2886 or on the Internet at www.naturepreserves.ky.gov.